

## **Reading School Building Committee**

**Minutes of RSBC Meeting Held on November 6, 2002, 7:30 p.m.**  
(In the RMHS Guidance Career Center)

### Committee Members Attending:

Russ Graham, Chair (RG)  
Dennis LaCroix (DL)  
Ray Porter (RP)  
Paula Perry (PP)  
Alex McRae (AM)  
Rich Radville (RR)  
Warren Cochrane (WC)  
Tim Twomey (TT)  
Jeff Struble (JS)  
Bill Carroll (BC)  
Michael Scarpitto (MS)

### Featured Guests:

Frank Orlando (Staff)  
Sid Bowen (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)  
Robert Peirce (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)

RG began by saying that the purpose of this meeting was to begin the process of making a decision as to which of the three options for the RMHS renovation should be developed into a schematic design.

He said that after four public meetings soliciting input from the community, he would open this meeting up for any further public comment before the Committee members began deliberating among themselves with no further public comments being taken. He asked if that approach was acceptable to the Committee and received no objections. Hence, he asked for any public comments.

With no further comments being offered from the observers, RG then asked if FAI had any more comments to make to the Committee. Sid Bowen said that he and Robert Peirce had no comments, but were there to answer any questions Committee members may have.

RG then proposed going through the various tasks requested in the RFQ to see if all its requirements had been met (referencing page 5 of Attachment 1 of the SBC's contract with FAI, which was a transcription of the RFQ's scope of work).

- Task 1a from the attachment required that the renovation be consistent with the DOE 's requirements for funding of school projects. RG noted that he was expecting a letter from the SBA that would explain if the approaches taken by all three of the Options under consideration would be acceptable to

them. He recommended that until that letter was received, a vote for any single option should be delayed in order to see if that option met the criteria of this task (no objections were raised to this recommendation). Sid Bowen said that all the options were designed to be consistent with previously approved projects that his firm had been involved with.

- Task 1b dictated that the preferred option offer a solution to Title IX inequities in the present athletic facilities. Mr. Bowen said that all three options did solve those problems.
- Task 1c addressed inadequate science laboratories, requiring that the renovation upgrade and/or add to the present labs. Again, Mr. Bowen indicated compliance of all the options with these criteria.
- Task 1d addressed updating existing finishes and building systems. All options fulfilled this task, according to FAI.
- Task 1e addressed updating building systems as required to meet current seismic codes. All options complied with this requirement, Mr. Bowen said.
- Task 1f addressed handicap accessibility upgrades as required by State and Federal regulations. This reg's were complied with in all the options, said Mr. Bowen.
- Task 1g requested review and recommendations for correction of the circulation patterns now recognized to be problematic in the existing school. Mr. Bowen said his firm had addressed those concerns as best they could with regards to Options 1 and 2, but acknowledged that the configurations arrived at in those schemes could not completely eradicate the problems. This was due to the non-central location of the cafeteria and the continued separation of classroom areas from one another. Frank Orlando commented that all of the options' circulation patterns were acceptable to his administration and that none were seen to be unsafe.
- Task 1h required the creation of dedicated music and drama spaces, which was accomplished in all of the options, according to FAI.
- Task 1i called for the creation of a dedicated language lab. Such a lab was included in all of the options, Mr. Bowen said.
- Task 1j called for a complete upgrade to educational technology systems in the building. FAI noted that each option included this upgrade.

Before beginning the deliberations, Sid Bowen asked that he be allowed to answer a question that had come up at an earlier meeting concerning the capacity of the options. He passed out copies of a data sheet listing the number of classrooms and the class sizes for each department, which summarized the maximum usage of the spaces to be provided in all three options (copy attached). He noted that since the programmatic space in each option was the same, a single analysis would suffice.

- Calculation of capacity entailed two approaches, according to Robert Peirce. The first involved totaling up the number of classrooms and multiplying them by the maximum target class sizes. This aggregate total was then multiplied

by a utilization factor (85% being the maximum factor that could be deemed realistic). This produced a maximum operational capacity of 1,421 students, but did not include RISE students (60 additional, if included).

- The second approach was a check on the first, using expected core facility capacities to determine maximum enrollments. Checking the Cafeteria, Gymnasium and Media Center this way, the capacities all exceeded the amounts produced in the first approach, assuming that steps could be taken to maximize core facility usage (such as having 3 lunch periods instead of 2).
- PP asked if the 85% utilization factor was do-able at RMHS. Frank Orlando said that it was a high goal to shoot for in scheduling usage of the classrooms. The typical factor would probably fall into the 70-80% range. Sid Bowen said that the 85% factor was a common factor used in SBA submissions.

To begin deliberations, RG recommended that each option be reviewed by listing their pros and cons for evaluation and record these attributes. As a way to proceed, JS suggested focusing on the differences between Options 1 and 2, which were very similar as renovation schemes. He thought a choice could be made between 1 and 2, which would then be compared with Option 3, the renovation/addition scheme. AM suggested focusing on Option 3 first and working backward to Option 1. RG still thought that teach option should be given its due individually. He received consensus from the Committee to proceed thus, beginning with Option 1.

*[Author's note: the majority of the remainder of the meeting was spent itemizing pro's and con's for each option. Mr. Orlando wrote down these items as "positive" or "negative" on a large tablet, which were subsequently transferred to letter-sized sheets. These sheets are attached with these minutes, labeled "Option 1", "Option 2", and "Option 3". Topics that fell outside of this itemization are described below.]*

JS pointed out that the layout of Option 1 did not really take advantage of the added space offered by the retention of the Industrial Arts wing. He said that by developing that wing as specialized core space (cafeteria, facilities and mechanical usage), Option 1 offered no more expandable square footage than Option 2. Educational program space was virtually the same in both options (with the exception of two more RISE classrooms in Option 1), which would be the space that would be rearranged in any future adaptation to programmatic needs.

A general discussion took place concerning the value of renovation work as opposed to new construction. It was thought that if done properly, the finished product of a renovation would be as acceptable as new construction. The disadvantages to a renovation would be the need to explore and discover the as-built conditions that need repair or replacement, plus the economic imperatives that force acceptance of undesirable space in a renovation. On the other hand, it was noted that new construction forces the abandonment of space that the community was well acquainted with.

Comments on phasing led to the assessment from FAI that the 32-34 month schedule expected with Option 2 was what should be expected for a renovation of the size of RMHS. Option 1's phasing was seen as being long, while Option 3's phasing was viewed as rapid (comparatively).

Expandability of Options 1 and 2 in the future, should it be deemed necessary, would most likely be across from the Media Center as an addition, FAI said. Option 3 would have several options, due to its more compressed footprint.

Sid Bowen expounded on the details necessary to upgrade the existing Auditorium to meet Code and acoustic requirements. Apparently the balcony and the area under it were poor spaces to begin with both in terms of bad sound and difficult accessibility. He recommended that any upgrade to better the space should do away with the balcony and install entry vestibules and a control room that extended into the rear of the hall (where the space under the balcony is presently). The existing floor slope was too steep for handicap use, he said, and would require some form of remediation. Some form of handicap access from the floor to the stage would be required. Catwalks over the ceiling of the main space would be recommended. He stressed that even after complying with these requirements, the presentation space would still have some compromises over ideal auditorium space. Building new auditorium space (as in Option 3) would involve fewer compromises, he said. Options 1 and 2 offered more storage space, however. Auditorium capacities under Options 1 and 2 would be 600-650 students where the Option 3 auditorium would hold 750-800 students.

RG noted that too many Committee members could not make the scheduled November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and thought that since the decision to be made was so important, another time should be chosen to allow maximum attendance. The date of November 19<sup>th</sup> was scheduled for the next SBC meeting.

RG called for a motion to accept the minutes of the September 18, 2002 RSBC meeting. DL so moved and was seconded by PP. He called for any additions, deletions or corrections desired by the Committee. With none appearing, a vote was taken and the result was 10 in favor, none opposed and one abstention (10-0-1); hence the motion passed.

RG called for a motion to accept the minutes of the October 1, 2002 RSBC meeting. RR so moved and was seconded by DL. He called for any additions, deletions or corrections desired by the Committee. AM had some corrections he thought should be made regarding the extent of the retention of the 1969 building in Option 3. He also added his request (made at that meeting) for clarification of the enrollment figures between the NESDEC and MISER forecasts. The motioners accepted these amendments. With no further corrections appearing, a vote was taken and the result was 10 in favor, none opposed and one abstention (10-0-1); hence the motion passed.

RG called for a motion to accept the minutes of the October 8, 2002 RSBC meeting. DL so moved and was seconded by PP. He called for any additions, deletions or corrections desired by the Committee. With none appearing, a vote was taken and the result was 10 in favor, none opposed and one abstention (10-0-1); hence the motion passed.

With no other business appearing, RG called for a motion to adjourn. RR so moved and was seconded by DL. A vote was taken and it was unanimous in the affirmative (time unrecorded).

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Jeffrey W. Struble, Secretary  
Reading School Building Committee

## **Reading School Building Committee**

**Minutes of RSBC Meeting Held on November 19, 2002, 7:30 p.m.**  
(In the RMHS Guidance Career Center)

### Committee Members Attending:

Russ Graham, Chair (RG)  
Tim Twomey (TT)  
Rich Radville (RR)  
Dennis LaCroix (DL)  
Bill Carroll (BC)  
Warren Cochrane (WC)  
Paula Perry (PP)  
Jeff Struble (JS)  
Alex McRae (AM)  
Ray Porter (RP)

### Featured Guests:

Frank Orlando (Staff)  
Dr. Harry Harutunian (Staff)  
Sid Bowen (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)  
Robert Peirce (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)  
Andrew Grimes (Finance Committee liaison)

RG began by saying that the purpose of this meeting was to continue the process of making a decision as to which of the three options for the RMHS renovation should be developed into a schematic design.

He suggested that the compiled list of negative aspects for each option be addressed to see if they could be mitigated in any way.

### Starting with Option 1:

- The most obvious drawback to this option was the long phasing schedule. RG asked if FAI saw any means to shorten this schedule. Sid Bowen replied that they had looked at trying to provide additional swing space in and around RMHS. They looked at the area under the Auditorium (the Civil Defense shelter), but found that the foundations for the (closely spaced) columns were not at a uniform elevation. The footings rose with the grade of the underlying ledge and intruded into the space that was to be used, making the area unusable for creating swing space. Importing modular classrooms was considered, but the cost for the 20 portables needed would add about \$2M to the cost. Hence, that approach was abandoned. He said that conceivably, the only way to lessen the phasing burden was by spending money for temporary swing space, which was undesirable.

- AM asked if by temporarily relocating the Superintendent's offices and the RISE program offsite, could the phasing be shortened (by using their present spaces). Mr. Bowen replied that the Supt.'s office was not suitable for uses other than administration (not classroom swing space) and as far as he knew, there was no alternate location available for RISE.
- Disruption to students and teachers would not be able to be reduced without more swing space that could be built to accommodate the classes that would use it (such as laboratories).
- At this point, high school student Nick Smith presented a petition with 261 signatures from high school students that supported Option 3, noting that he thought the decreased community space in that option could be made up by utilizing other space in other schools (such as Coolidge Middle School).
- The high risk of contingency funds being needed was directly tied to the amount of renovation; hence Opt. 1's large amount of renovation could not be mitigated without changing the plan materially. The same applied to the cost of phasing relative any long term benefits resulting from the phasing; Option 1 had the highest cost of phasing with very little benefit and couldn't be changed.
- Regarding quality of space, Mr. Bowen pointed out that the auditorium space could be increased in quality if desired, but it would be at an additional cost.
- No improvement in supervision plans was possible in Option's 1 (or 2). Only Option 3 presented opportunities in this area.
- Costs to maintain Option 1 were the most, due to its largest square footage. No avenues of improvement were evident in this area.
- The cafeteria location in Option 1 was the result of considering several locations in the design phase and finding that any other location detracted from the programmatic organization for the building as well as from the phasing plan, so no improvement seemed possible.
- Traffic flow could not be improved without programmatic reorganization or additions of expensive corridor additions, which were not seen as improvements to the project.

Regarding Option 2, Mr. Bowen remarked that mitigation of its negatives would be more or less the same as for the negatives of Option 1.

Regarding the negatives of Option 3:

- The loss of the girl's gym and the Lecture Hall were seen as the most obvious negatives of Option 3, according to Mr. Bowen. There was no recovery of the girl's gym possible in Option 3 (Option 2 was seen as the best scheme for retention of that space), although the new gyms at the new elementary school and at a renovated Barrows School could take the place of the girl's gym for community use. The Lecture Hall's function could be replicated with an additional 4,000 sq. ft. of space but he thought that function could be provided in other ways in other areas of the building.

- WC noted that the auditorium and art/music/drama spaces were not as good in Option 3 as in Options 1 and 2. He asked if there was any way to improve Opt. 3's fine arts layout. Mr. Bowen said that in the normal progression of the area's design, the spaces could be improved and rearranged to better them. A basic problem in Opt. 3, however (not present in Opt.'s 1 and 2), was the fact that the programs were on two floors rather than one.
- The highest cost of Opt. 3 was due to the high amount of new construction and could not be mitigated without cutting the program which made use of the new facilities.
- Regarding the disposition of the SBA on the reimbursability of Opt. 3, RG passed out a letter from that agency (**copy** attached) that confirmed their verbal assurances that Opt. 3 would be considered for review as a reimbursable project. He read the letter aloud.
- Negatives such as possible soils difficulties and less "green" construction were endemic to the need for new construction and could not be mitigated.
- Storage in Option 3 could be improved not by adding square footage, Mr. Bowen conjectured, but by tightening the spaces within the current target area and planning efficiently for adequate storage. He reasoned, also, that the space needs for things like media storage will decrease in time due to technology usage.
- BC led a discussion about space needs from a teacher's perspective. He described the benefits of dedicated classrooms for each teacher yet understood that the economics and programmatic formulae used to determine actual classroom numbers would not make such a thing possible. He still had concerns about the apparent reduction of teachers' space in Option 3. A general discussion followed on the topic of Reading's culture of funding school projects (reducing the scope of projects appears to be a historical trend).

RG then asked if anyone on the Committee felt that Option 1 should be considered as the chosen option. No one did, so Option 1 was removed from further consideration by consensus.

With the choice then being between Options 2 or 3, RG asked for each member's opinion:

- BC preferred Option 3 due to its short schedule and its least disruption to the education process for the students and staff.
- DL chose Option 3, citing his belief that it offered the best betterment to high school education between the two choices.
- TT chose Option 3 saying that his reasons were similar to those given by previous members. He also thought Opt. 3 would produce the best visual improvement to the school, creating an attractive building that the community would embrace.

- RR chose Option 3 after previously favoring Opt. 2, saying that the desirable aspects of Opt. 2 that would be lost (Lecture Hall, the girl's gym, etc.) could be corrected, according to FAI's suggestions for improving negatives such as those. He also liked the fact that the school would never be without a usable auditorium under Opt. 3.
- WC also wanted Opt. 3 for many of the same reasons mentioned by RR. He thought that his concerns with Opt. 3's negatives would be addressed through the continuing design process.
- PP had favored Option 3 from the beginning, she said, and had heard from many people in the community about the desirability of Opt. 3. She felt it had the least surprises (in terms of the impact to students and on costs).
- JS favored Opt. 2 for several reasons. He said that he thought Opt. 3 had less contingency space and that plans to add space in Opt. 3 to replicate functions provided in Opt. 2 would force concessions in the overall program to meet a budget. He felt that creating a smaller high school from a larger one would make the possibility of adding on space in the future politically impossible. He felt the degree of explanation necessary to justify Opt. 3 would be too much for enough voters to absorb prior to a debt exclusion election. In general, he thought Opt. 2 was more conservative than Opt. 3.
- AM chose Opt. 2 over Opt. 3 because he felt Opt. 2 was more like what the community was expecting. He felt that losing the girl's gym under Opt. 3 would be detrimental to non-school programs and had doubts that the field house alone would be adequate for the community. With only one chance to do this project (owing to deteriorating State funding in the future), he thought Opt. 2 had the best chance of being accepted.
- RP expressed disappointment with the options developed by FAI, noting that the more or less equivalent costs of all three were not what he was expecting. He thought that a basic repair of the present school's infrastructure could have been a beginning point for building options on, using an incremental approach. He said he was not comfortable with voting for any of the options. If he were to vote, he said, he would lean towards Opt. 2.

RG then asked for opinions from RMHS Principal Frank Orlando and Superintendent Harry Harutunian.

- Mr. Orlando first thanked FAI for their efforts in developing the options and the SBC for their work on the project. He compared the various facets of both Options 2 and 3 and explained his decision to support Option 3. He felt that Option 3 would make it possible for Reading high school students to achieve the greatness that they have always had the potential for achieving (but have been hampered in doing so by outmoded facilities).
- Dr. Harutunian agreed with Mr. Orlando's comments. He also added that the reduction in size of the school would be beneficial to his budgeting for maintenance of the facility. He thought that the phasing advantages of Option 3 were educationally desirable and that the increased parking would be a plus. He said he had gotten feedback at his many community



appearances that indicated the popularity of Option 3. Hence, he favored that option.

- RG added his opinion, saying that he favored Option 3 because he felt it was the best educational solution over the long term. He believed that the space reductions realized by that option could be made up elsewhere in the Town. He thought that the only real opposition to Option 3 from the voters would be on the basis of cost alone, not the plan itself (whichever that was).

TT then entered a motion to approve Option 3 as the recommendation to Town Meeting for the renovation of RMHS. DL seconded the motion. RG called for any more discussion.

- JS took issue with statements that the cost differences between Options 2 and 3 were negligible. He pointed out that the difference in cost to Reading (after reimbursement of the maximum amount or "cap" of around \$50M) was about \$2.8M, which represented a 12.7% increase in the cost to Reading over Opt. 2. He thought that would be a hurdle to get over with Town Meeting and the voters.
- JS also added that while he intended to vote for Option 2, should Option 3 be the rest of the Committee's choice, he would endorse it.

With no further discussion appearing, a vote was taken and the results were eight in favor, one opposed and one abstention (8-1-1); thus the motion passed.

Dr. Harutunian added that he agreed with JS's calculations regarding the cost differentials between Opt.'s 2 and 3, but he felt that the (operational) savings afforded by Option 3 would make up that difference.

Sid Bowen asked that he be allowed to develop a work schedule for the development of Option 3 for the Committee's review at the next scheduled meeting, tentatively scheduled for December 11, 2002. In addition, Dr. Harutunian asked permission to work directly with FAI in assembling the required December 1<sup>st</sup> preliminary submission to SBA (now for Option 3). Permission was granted.

RG thanked the school personnel and the other Committee members for their work to date on the project.

RR described his recent efforts to reply to an editorial in the *Reading Advocate* newspaper that had purported to question why Reading couldn't renovate its high school for what it cost other schools in other states to renovate theirs (at lower amounts). The editorial cited evidence from a web-site that awarded exemplary school project designs; specifically schools in Maine, North Carolina and Colorado.

- RR contacted the project architects for the North Carolina and Colorado to discuss the costs for those projects. He found that the costs listed on the web-site for the schools were not project costs, but construction costs. These costs did not include furnishing, finishes, fees or equipment and in the case of the North Carolina job, excluded site costs as well. They also were projects completed several years ago.

- RR then produced a spread sheet (copy attached) that attempted to upgrade those costs to account for things like inflation (2.66% per year), use of union sub-contractors (required in MA; a 10% increase), local cost differentials (45% increase), size differences (RMHS is larger), site costs, demolition costs, hazardous material removal, architect's fees, "soft" costs, etc. The per square foot costs for the adjusted out-of-state schools was around \$225/s.f. for NC and @212/s.f for CO while Opt. 3 was estimated at \$198/s.f. This contradicted the editorial's entire premise.
- He said he had contacted the *Advocate's* publisher to point out this contradiction and ask why the editor had not done similar research before writing the editorial.
- Andrew Grimes (FinCom liaison) said he had also contacted the web-site owners and found that the costs listed were not the real focus of the web-site (innovative design was). Discussions with the web-site owners revealed that they were not surprised by the project costs attributed to Opt. 3 and that some areas of the country experience costs on the order of \$400/s.f. He noted that the owners recognized FAI for their exemplary design work in MA.

JS asked Sid Bowen about the likelihood of the success of the DOE recommendation to the legislature to make school construction projects exempt from the State's Chap. 149-mandated requirement for filed sub-bids (made in the same advisory as the recommendation to reduce reimbursement rates 10% across the board). Mr. Bowen said his discussions with SBA indicated that there might be a chance that such an exemption would be passed, but he had no more information than that.

With no other business appearing, RG called for a motion to adjourn. DL so moved and was seconded by PP. A vote was taken and it was unanimous in the affirmative (time 10:05 p.m.).

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Jeffrey W. Struble, Secretary  
Reading School Building Committee

## **Reading School Building Committee**

**Minutes of RSBC Meeting Held on December 3, 2002, 7:30 p.m.**  
(In the RMHS Guidance Career Center)

### Committee Members Attending:

Russ Graham, Chair (RG)  
Bill Carroll (BC)  
Tim Twomey (TT)  
Warren Cochrane (WC)  
Paula Perry (PP)  
Jeff Struble (JS)  
Alex McRae (AM)  
Dennis LaCroix (DL)

### Featured Guests:

Frank Orlando (Staff)  
Dr. Harry Harutunian (Staff)  
Sid Bowen (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)  
Robert Peirce (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)

WC introduced two scouts attending the meeting from Troop 728 working on their Citizenship in the Community merit badges, Ted Coleman and Robert Cochrane.

RG announced that the BOS had requested a joint meeting with the SBC on the following Tuesday (12/10/02) to discuss the need for a special Town Meeting and a special election for the high school project so that they (the BOS) might be able to schedule such events. The purpose of this SBC meeting, RG said, was to go over a probable timetable for the remainder of the schematic design project in order to be prepared for the BOS joint meeting. He asked that FAI begin this discussion.

Prior to beginning, Robert Peirce asked that the subject of authorizing payment for test borings into the sub-surface layers underlying the area for the new addition portion of Option 3 be taken up. He passed out a memorandum containing a proposal from Weber Associates (geotechnical consultant) that itemized the procedures to be done (four borings plus analysis and the costs associated with them (copy attached)). The consultant's fee was already covered by the contract between FAI and the SBC, but the drilling/patching costs of \$1,825 were not. RG called for a motion to authorize this amount and it was so moved by DL and seconded by PP. Calling for discussion, JS asked if borings were not needed under the proposed area for the new auditorium. Mr. Peirce said FAI would ask the consultant if additional borings would be required there and if they were, then another cost proposal/authorization would be requested. After more general discussion regarding the need for borings, a vote was taken and the result was unanimous in the affirmative.

Mr. Pierce then began his discussion of the schedule for the next few months.

- He said his office had come up with two timetables based on two different dates for the debt exclusion election which would result from acceptance of the schematic design by Town Meeting (at a January 13, 2003 Special Town Meeting). He presented both in a handout to the Committee (*copy* attached).
- He pointed out that the tasks to follow up until the Special Town Meeting were the same for both timetables, namely finishing the schematic design of Option 3 while coordinating that design with the SBC and other Town boards.
- One timetable took February 25, 2003 as a tentative election date, a Special Election. This would allow the maximum time to solicit/select the (completing) architect and prepare the project for a formal SBA submission on June 1, 2003. The other timetable took the regularly scheduled election on April 8, 2003 as the debt exclusion vote and compressed the post-vote tasks of architect selection and project preparation for a June 1<sup>st</sup> submission into eight weeks instead of fourteen (for the Special Election timetable). He noted that although the official submission date for projects is June 27<sup>th</sup>, the SBA strongly recommends submitting project proposals on June 1<sup>st</sup> so that they can be reviewed for compliance with submission guidelines. If amendments were necessary to make a proposal compliant, there would then be time to file one before June 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Pierce noted that both scenarios employed advance preparation and release of the RFQ for the final architect prior to the debt exclusion election. This would allow the receipt of responses to the RFQ on or about the date of the election, requiring only three more weeks to select the architect. In this way, the non-design time between the election and the June 1<sup>st</sup> submission would be minimized. Several Committee members discussed the effect of soliciting architects for proposals before knowing if the project were to be funded. It was acknowledged that if the RFQ were clear on the circumstances surrounding the funding, then the architects would know the risk involved with committing their time and effort to get the commission.
- A general discussion took place concerning the logistics of the development of the RFQ. Advance preparation (before the election) by which board (the School Committee or the SBC) appeared to be confusing, but the article to be put before Town Meeting was clear that all procurement of professional services for the final design of the project was to be overseen by the School Committee. Also discussed was the suitability of calling for responses to the RFQ before, after or on the same date as the election. Such decisions were thought to be in the purview of the SC if Town Meeting approved the high school article. Dr. Harutunian sought and received permission from the Committee to begin work on the RFQ by the Administration before the Special Town Meeting (by consensus).
- Messrs. Peirce and Bowen argued that the disadvantages placed on the project by an April 8<sup>th</sup> election were considerable, primarily due to the short time allowed after architect selection (about one month). The amount of document production, multiple board approvals and familiarization (for a new design team) would tax the design professionals responsible for them and risk producing an unacceptable SBA submission. The economic disadvantages of having to wait another year for state participation could be on the order of \$6M if the State reduced reimbursement rates by at least 10%

in that year (which is now proposed by the DOE) when added to ongoing inflation costs. The Committee asked that FAI summarize these cost penalties for joint meeting with the Selectmen.

- Observer Linda Phillips asked if the SBA might ask for a different option in February after reviewing the initial submission from December 1 and also wondered if making the June 1<sup>st</sup> deadline might not be of value if the SBA was going to evaluate projects until the Fall of 2003 (which is in FY04). Sid Bowen answered that the SBA had already responded that Option 3 was acceptable for submission. He also said that his discussions with the financial officer for the SBA indicated that June 2003 submission were unlikely to be affected by later revisions (including the proposed 10% reimbursement reduction). He reiterated his understanding that the exact course for any project submitted to the SBA this year could not be known in advance owing to the uncertainties in the State's financial situation.
- JS asked if FAI had enough time in their pre-Town Meeting schedule to assemble the schematic design, including an independent cost estimate. Mr. Bowen said that if the SBC could meet with them at the times indicated and if no substantial roadblocks were encountered in the design's progress, they had enough time.
- More discussion on the logistics of calling both the Special Town Meeting and the Special Election occurred, including the desire to put the subject matter before the Finance Committee well before the Town Meeting.
- Observer Jackie Mandell asked FAI for a list of the items submitted to the SBA in the December 1<sup>st</sup> package. Robert Peirce responded that the submission contained a draft of a long range educational plan, a rationale for the project, the existing conditions report, a summary of the three Options developed, a description of the preferred Option (Opt. 3) and an inventory of the existing high school space.

RG called for a motion to accept the minutes of the October 16, 2002 RSBC meeting. DL so moved and was seconded by PP. He called for any additions, deletions or corrections desired by the Committee. With none appearing, a vote was taken and the result was 7 in favor, none opposed and one abstention (7-0-1); hence the motion passed.

With no other business appearing, RG called for a motion to adjourn. TT so moved and was seconded by PP. A vote was taken and it was unanimous in the affirmative (time unrecorded).

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Jeffrey W. Struble, Secretary  
Reading School Building Committee

## **Reading School Building Committee**

**Minutes of RSBC Meeting Held on December 11, 2002, 7:30 p.m.**  
(In the RMHS Guidance Career Center)

### Committee Members Attending:

Russ Graham, Chair (RG)  
Dennis LaCroix (DL)  
Paula Perry (PP)  
Alex McRae (AM)  
Rich Radville (RR)  
Jeff Struble (JS)  
Tim Twomey (TT)  
Bill Carroll (BC)  
Michael Scarpitto (MS), p/t

### Featured Guests:

Frank Orlando (Staff)  
Sid Bowen (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)  
Robert Peirce (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)  
Tom Meuller (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)

RG passed out revised copies of the proposed warrant for the Special Town Meeting in which the article for completion of the high school design and construction has been placed (copy attached). The only substantive change from previous version of the article was to revise the time period in which the passage of a debt exclusion for the funds was required (90 days from the close of the Sp. Town Meeting).

AM suggested that FAI present and explain the specific steps needed to be taken in a June 1<sup>st</sup> submission to the SBA for the benefit of the BOS in their deliberations over calling a special debt exclusion election. Sid Bowen answered that they could certainly itemize the list of requirements and explain them briefly, but he cautioned that producing a complete understanding of each step in the process would take more time than was available, owing to the complexity of the subject. This led to a general discussion on how completion of all the steps took significant amounts of time and how that affected the different scenarios for an architect's handling of the task after an early special election or a later regular election to produce a June 1<sup>st</sup> SBA submission. The disadvantages placed on the architect and the town by waiting for later elections were reiterated.

RG went over the various pieces of information that will be placed in the information packet that will accompany the Sp. Town Meeting warrant, including costs, financial impacts, plans and descriptions (due Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>). TT asked if the cost estimate that was due on Jan 8<sup>th</sup> was different, how would that be handled at Town Meeting. RG said that the motion made on the floor of Town Meeting was the proper place for the final amount that Town Meeting must act on, not the amount contained in the pre-published article.

AM asked for copies of the education specifications prior to Town Meeting. FAI said they could finalize those ed. specs before the next scheduled SBC meeting (Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>).

FAI then presented an update of the Option 3 plans and other drawings (copies attached).

- Sid Bowen explained that the updates were generated by comments from the SBC and from the public input sessions about how this option would look, by further consideration of the phasing, better arrangement of spaces for lighting and adjacencies and by deeper review of the topography of the site.
- Regarding the topography, it was concluded that the main entrance elevation should be at what is now the elevation of the Lecture Hall, designated as the Ground Floor in the new plans. This would “feed” people into a main thoroughfare that becomes a two-story sky-lit “street” around which the main activities of the school were accessed. As this street fed into the field house at the level above the main one, a “collector” would be added to house stairs and elevators and a lobby on its south end. The outside area to the south of the field house would contain a play area for RISE students and could accommodate occasional vehicle traffic, but was not intended to be a vehicle thruway for daily use.
- Regarding day-lighting, the new education wing was turned on an east-west axis to admit more southern light, which also produced a more controllable heating and cooling environment.
- Regarding phasing, it was felt that when the new space is finished and the students were moved into it, the existing space to be renovated would still contain the science labs. This would entail either temporary lab space being built (and dismantled later) or a curtailment of the science program during renovations. This was thought to be undesirable, so the new addition had been reorganized to contain permanent science labs. This meant that the present science areas would be renovated as English and social studies classrooms (in effect, switching the previous outlay of final classrooms). Hence, the science program would not require alteration during construction.
- Regarding adjacencies, the switch between the math/science departments and the social sciences allowed the music, art and drama spaces to be congregated on one floor (Ground). This achieved the desirable arrangement that was present in Options One and Two. It also allowed the Drama department to open up an area directly onto the main “street” for non-auditorium performances.
- The auditorium had become wider than it was long, allowing shorter distances between the rear seats and the stage. This created a more workable environment acoustically and visually. Administrative offices were present at each of the primary entrances.
- TT expressed satisfaction with the revisions, saying that they enlivened the scheme. BC said that the drawings showed a school rather than just a building. RR thought the shift of the main entrance one level up and towards the center of the building was an improvement over the previous scheme.

- A general discussion ensued with Committee and Administration members questioning the effects of the new scheme on phasing, security, drama storage, handicap issues, circulation, service/delivery areas, etc.
- A revised site plan was presented (*copy attached*). Parking had been adjusted around the field house, deleting it between the athletic field and the field house and adding a separate small lot for the superintendent that had its only access from the southern corner of the property (off Bancroft Street). Various members noted that the lack of a continuous vehicular loop around the field house would be a problem during elections, which are periodically held there. Mr. Bowen acknowledged this and said that it would be studied further and the plan would be adjusted. More discussion concerning parking and driving around the field house took place, with various ideas being suggested for FAI to consider.
- Materials for the exterior were envisioned to be brick to match the brick of the remaining portions of the present building with breaks between the main areas being covered with glazing materials. Skylights and clerestory window areas would be used to improve the penetration of natural light into the interiors.

RG recognized TT who put forward the following motion: "Move that the School Building Committee request the Board of Selectmen in the strongest and most urgent terms possible to have a Special Election on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003 on Article 4 of the current draft of the Town Meeting warrant." PP seconded the motion. Calling for discussion, JS asked TT if he felt the words "strongest and most urgent terms possible" were necessary. TT said he did, referring to the lack of action by the BOS concerning the calling of a Special Election at their meeting the previous night (12-10-02). With no further discussion, a vote was taken and it was unanimous in the affirmative (9-0-0).

RG then called for a motion accepting the subject matter of Article 4 of the current draft of the Special Town Meeting warrant. DL so moved and was seconded by TT. With no further discussion appearing, a vote was taken and it was unanimous in the affirmative (9-0-0).

RG called for a motion to accept the minutes of the October 30, 2002 RSBC meeting. DL so moved and was seconded by PP. He called for any additions, deletions or corrections desired by the Committee. AM asked that the words "a capacity of 1,100 students" in the next to last paragraph on page 3 be changed to read "it was reported that the scheduling of classes was already challenging for 1,100 students," correcting a factual error. The amendment was acceptable to the motioner and the seconder. With no further discussion appearing, a vote was taken and the result was 8 in favor, none opposed and one abstention (8-0-1); hence the motion passed.

With no other business appearing, RG called for a motion to adjourn. DL so moved and was seconded by PP. A vote was taken and it was unanimous in the affirmative (time unrecorded).



## **Reading School Building Committee**

**Minutes of RSBC Meeting Held on December 23, 2002, 8:45 p.m.**  
(In the RMHS Guidance Career Center)

### Committee Members Attending:

Russ Graham, Chair (RG)  
Michael Scarpitto (MS)  
Paula Perry (PP)  
Jeff Struble (JS)  
Alex McRae (AM)  
Warren Cochrane (WC)  
Bill Carroll (BC)  
Rich Radville (RR)  
Dennis LaCroix (DL)

### Featured Guests:

Frank Orlando (Staff)  
Sid Bowen (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)

*[Author's Note: This meeting began as a joint meeting with the Finance Committee held in the Conference Room of Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the RMHS project and the debt exclusion it required. Refer to the FinCom minutes of 12/23/02 for a record of those proceedings. After the FinCom recommended passage of the RMHS article on the warrant for the Special Town Meeting on Jan. 13, 2003, a recess was called and the SBC members and guests traveled and regrouped in the RMHS Guidance Career Center at 8:45 p.m., which is where these minutes begin.]*

RG began by discussing the likely presentation that the SBC will make at the Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting. The need to explain the problems of the high school was seen as repetitious due to the previous presentations by the full Committee (last year), the update presented by the Chair at November's Subsequent Town Meeting and the background material that was prepared to accompany the warrant. WC stressed the need to point out the costs involved should Option 3 not pass (the cost of doing nothing).

Sid Bowen said his firm would prepare a summary of items that would unquestionably require repair or replacement, but he cautioned that an obvious omission would be the cost of updating the educational program for the school. This update was fundamental to their charge in preparing the schematic design. He also noted that some infrastructure updating would not be reimbursable, such as fire sprinklers (since they would be an addition rather than an upgrade).

Mr. Bowen presented the results of the test borings made in the existing parking lot and the courtyard to probe the sub-surface areas that would be supporting new foundations in Option 3 (copy attached).

- Only one boring was made in the parking lot due to uncertainty on the Town's part on where existing underground utilities might lay. This boring showed competent bearing material at a reasonable depth and did not encounter peat or other deleterious strata. Mr. Bowen pointed out that this one boring did not prove the non-existence of peat in the area, but it was sufficient to make a reasonable prediction of foundation types to use on the project.
- The courtyard boring encountered refusal at relatively shallow depths on three separate attempts. This indicated to the directing engineer the presence of ledge in the area. This, too, allowed a prediction of the foundation type to be expected for the new auditorium structure.

Messrs. Bowen and Peirce passed out the State's form 645-1, which was a checklist of required submittals for a formal SBA submission (*copy* attached).

FAI presented updated plans and elevations, including a site plan. He said that discussions with the Town engineer and Town Manager about the site plan, and they made it clear that they needed one-way traffic around the Field House during elections. They also had concerns with access from Imagination Station and the number of parking spaces around the school. Mr. Bowen said his team was still working on incorporating their concerns into the site plan and would likely not have a complete solution by the time of Town Meeting (Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>). He did say they would show a complete vehicle loop around the Field House.

He went over the updated (CAD-drawn) plans (*copies* attached), showing rearrangements with the layouts for the administrative areas and the firewalls. The main entrances were updated to show common construction (glazing and brick). He explained various program-improving changes that embellished ideas shown on previous plans. Members of the Committee discussed the pros and cons of the two-story gallery along the main "street" with FAI. The discussion continued about other pieces of the overall design.

A discussion took place concerning the presentation of the graphic displays as accurate representations of the finished school.

- FAI argued that the schematic design is likely to change in subsequent design phases and what is shown now may not be what is built later.
- RG expressed concern that the elevations show what the school would look like and it was reasonable for people to assume that when they went to vote for it. Changes to it might be seen as being misleading.
- On the other hand, others argued, avoiding the elevations could be seen as not being true to the assurances given during the schematic design campaign that going to such a design level would produce a clear idea of what voters would be voting for in a debt exclusion election. Some type of visual display of the "look" of the high school (or possibly multiple looks) seemed warranted.
- While some members suggested being very clear about the preliminary nature of the elevations (i.e., being subject to change), others countered that such explanations might be possible with Town Meeting, but not likely with the general electorate. The experience with the preliminary "diagrams" for

the Dividence Road elementary school project being taken as final layouts by many in the community was raised in support of this last point.

- The graphics shown were sufficient to explain to the cost estimators what the construction would be, Mr. Bowen explained, and subsequent changes would not materially affect the estimate.
- It was thought that a dialogue with the School Committee (who would have the final determination of the final design and “look”) would be prudent in order to decide how much of the elevations to show to the public.

RR suggested that FAI look into the addition of more rows of seats in the new auditorium to boost the capacity to close to 900. FAI said they would do so.

Observer Jackie Mandell asked if the contract between the SBC and FAI would end with the approval of Town Meeting even if the SBA were to reject Option 3 for some reason. She was answered that the contract required that FAI produce a reimbursable schematic design and even if Town Meeting approved going to the next design phase for Option 3 (under the direction of the School Committee), if that schematic design was ruled not reimbursable, the SBC would still hold FAI to the contract requirement to produce one that was. The contract did not necessarily end with approval of the warrant.

RG reported that he had discussed the present high school with members of the Historical Commission and was told that they saw no historical significance to the existing school other than the fact that it was one of the last projects designed by a firm headed by two Reading residents (who had done a number of other public buildings in the Town).

Observer Kendra Cooper asked for information regarding the synthetic athletic field surface proposed for the stadium and practice fields. Mr. Bowen reiterated the details given to the FinCom earlier in the evening and various members presented anecdotes about other communities who had installed such surfaces and apparently benefited from them.

With no other business appearing, RG called for a motion to adjourn. DL so moved and was seconded by BC. A vote was taken and it was unanimous in the affirmative (time 10:30 p.m.).

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Jeffrey W. Struble, Secretary  
Reading School Building Committee

## **Reading School Building Committee**

**Minutes of RSBC Meeting Held on January 8, 2003, 7:30 p.m.**  
(In the RMHS Guidance Career Center)

### Committee Members Attending:

Russ Graham, Chair (RG)  
Bill Carroll (BC)  
Rich Radville (RR)  
Tim Twomey (TT) p/t  
Jeff Struble (JS)  
Dennis LaCroix (DL)  
Paula Perry (PP)  
Alex McRae (AM)  
Michael Scarpitto (MS) p/t

### Featured Guests:

Frank Orlando (Staff)  
Sid Bowen (Flansburgh Associates, Inc.)

RG began by recognizing TT, who read a letter of disclosure addressed to the Town Clerk (**copy** attached). In the letter, he explained his belief that his position as a principal in an architectural firm that employs relatives of principals of other architectural firms that might apply for the (possibly) upcoming RMHS project did not constitute a conflict of interest concerning his participation in the architect selection process (as a member of the Reading School Committee and the School Building Committee). He wrote that he had checked with the State Ethics Commission on this matter and that they concurred with this belief.

RG reported that WC had asked that the SBC be prepared to address the subject of what would have to be done to RMHS should the proposed renovation scheme not pass (either Town Meeting or the debt exclusion election). Sid Bowen said his firm had prepared an itemized list of prioritized recommendations and their costs that he characterized as "The Cost of Doing Nothing" (**copy** attached). He discussed the various items that he said were derived from the production of the existing conditions report, as well as their reimbursability by the State. He emphasized that the list did not contain upgrades for the educational program or the surrounding grounds; only the physical infrastructure of the existing building. The compiled costs did not contain any provisions for phasing or for inflation. Committee members discussed the items and compared them with the estimates made by a sub-committee a year ago. RG asked RR to go over FAI's list in depth to see if any significant differences were present.

Mr. Bowen then passed out copies of the summary of the independent cost estimate performed on the schematic design for Option 3 by Atkins Hanscomb Faithful & Gould (AHFG).

- The total construction cost (without non-construction costs like furnishings, equipment, fees, contingencies, etc.) was \$38,424,778, which agreed closely with FAI budget estimate of \$38,470,710. However, AHFG also recommended carrying \$1,005,600 to account for cost inflation that would occur over the hiatus between estimating and actual bidding and construction (approx. 3% for a year's wait). Mr. Bowen said that he felt that such escalation could be absorbed by fine-tuning the design in the next design phase without affecting the basic programs (physical or educational).
- He noted that the estimate and budget figures included recent revisions (reductions) that had been coordinated with the administration. He would show those revisions later in the meeting.
- He pointed out that it was common in his firm's experience for cost estimates at the schematic level of design to be 10-15% over the budget estimate, requiring changes in the scope planned for such projects. A 3% overage would be much less troublesome to eliminate, he reasoned, and the budget still reserved a 10% design contingency (\$3.8M) which could conceivably replace any items eliminated due to this \$1M escalation. Thus, Mr. Bowen recommended that no changes to the project be made at this juncture.
- Several Committee members with design/construction experience remarked that these results were encouraging and could indicate a favorable school construction "market" for this project. Mr. Bowen agreed.
- Included in the materials distributed with the estimate summary was a copy of a letter from FAI to the Superintendent calculating the estimated SBA reimbursement for the project (copy attached). Based on allowable square footage and declared dollars/sq. ft. amounts from 2002, the maximum reimbursable project cost was \$50,758,700. All project costs over that amount were assumed to be 100% paid by the Town of Reading. With a calculated reimbursement rate of 58.05% (based on the base rate plus applicable incentive points), this resulted in a total reimbursement of \$29,465,425 of the budgeted total cost and a (resultant) total cost to Reading of \$24,452,320. No incentive points for maintenance or energy efficient design were expected.
- JS asked what would have to be done to bring the project cost down to equal the maximum reimbursable amount allowed by the SBA. Mr. Bowen replied that program items would have to be cut. He gave examples of likely items, such as eliminating the football and practice field upgrades or reducing the number of seats in the Auditorium. BC said that he thought no reductions should be made and that the decisions should be made on the project with all of its program revisions. JS agreed, citing the apparently favorable current market for construction that made deferment of desired program changes a bad move economically.
- RG asked if the consensus of the Committee was to put forward the full budget cost of \$54,305,000 as the recommended amount for the motion at Town Meeting. No objections were noted.

Mr. Bowen passed out revised plans (copies attached), which he noted were not substantially different from previous versions. FAI had reduced a corridor, mechanical

space and a back entry and had opted to use the area above the present media center as storage, all of which had reduced the cost estimate. He explained expected circulation patterns and security planning in answer to questions about them.

Points to make in Town Meeting were discussed with Mr. Bowen. Emphasis on the cost estimate and analysis of the phasing issues were seen as being crucial to presenting the schematic design.

AM asked for a copy of the latest education specifications, expressing discomfort with not having reviewed them prior to this. Frank Orlando was asked if he was satisfied with the ed. specs. produced thus far. He said he was. Sid Bowen said the spec's were still being changed due to the Special Education requirements, which were difficult to predict. He said, however, that he would produce them for AM the next day.

Observer Jackie Mandell expressed concern over the extent of the subsurface boring information over the intended addition sites. Only two borings could be made, due to the Engineering Department's refusal to allow drilling in areas where the buried utilities could not be located with confidence. Mr. Bowen and JS explained that what was found in those few borings was sufficient to make an confident assumption of the type of foundations that would be needed in those areas, allowing reasonable predictions of their cost.

The Committee went over its future schedule and activities up to Town Meeting and beyond (if necessary). It was the consensus that the SBC should be available for informational sessions if and when such sessions were organized. RG asked that Committee members to think about the role of the SBC and the high school should the project get to a Special Election and fail.

RG called for a motion to accept the minutes of the November 6, 2002 RSBC meeting. RR so moved and was seconded by DL. He called for any additions, deletions or corrections desired by the Committee. With none appearing, a vote was taken and the result was unanimous in the affirmative.

RG called for a motion to accept the minutes of the November 19, 2002 RSBC meeting. DL so moved and was seconded by PP. He called for any additions, deletions or corrections desired by the Committee. With none appearing, a vote was taken and the result was unanimous in the affirmative.

With no other business appearing, DL called for a motion to adjourn. PP so moved and was seconded by BC. A vote was taken and it was unanimous in the affirmative (time unrecorded).

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Jeffrey W. Struble, Secretary  
Reading School Building Committee